

REMARKS

Before this amendment, claims 1 and 3-35 were pending in the application (claim 2 canceled previously). The Office Action rejected: (a) claims 1 and 26 as anticipated under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) by U.S. Patent No. 5,966,666 to Yamaguchi ("Yamaguchi"); and (b) claims 3-6 and 27-35 as unpatentable pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 103 in view of Yamaguchi and U.S. Patent No. 6,208,875 to Damgaard. The Applicant notes that the Office Action did not provide any specific rejection of claims 11-15, but the Office Action Summary indicated nevertheless those claims as rejected.

Furthermore, the Office further objected to then-pending claims 7-10 and 16-25 as depending on a rejected base claim. The Office Action indicated that those claims would be allowable if amended to include the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claims.

The Applicant respectfully disagrees with the rejections of, and objections to (including the statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter), of the claims. Nevertheless, to gain issuance of a patent, the Applicant amends the claims without prejudice and seeks to pursue the objected-to claims in this application. More specifically, the Applicant cancels without prejudice claims 3-7, 12-16, and 26-35 (claim 2 canceled previously). The Applicant amends claims 1, 8, 11, and 17.

The Applicant reserves the right, and presently intends, to pursue the rejected and/or other claims in follow-on or other applications and to present arguments with respect to those claims in such applications. Furthermore, the Applicant notes that it does not amend the claims because of the rejections over the cited references; rather, the Applicant merely cancels those claims to facilitate compact prosecution and to expedite the issuance of a patent. More particularly, with respect to claims 11-15, because the Office Action failed to include specific reasoning for the rejection of the claims, the Applicant does not make the cancellations because of any references on which the Office might have relied.

In view of the above remarks, the Applicant respectfully submits that the presently pending claims are allowable. The Applicant therefore respectfully requests a prompt Notice of Allowance.

CONCLUSION

In view of the remarks above, the Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are in allowable condition. Consequently, favorable reconsideration and prompt issuance of a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested. No fee (other than for the extension of time) is believed to be due. Should any fees under 37 CFR 1.16-1.21 be required for any reason relating to the enclosed materials, however, the Commissioner is authorized to deduct such fees from Deposit Account No. 10-1205/SILA:096.

The examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the phone number indicated below with any questions or comments, or to otherwise facilitate expeditious and compact prosecution of the application.

Respectfully submitted,



MAXIMILIAN R. PETERSON
Registration No. 46,469
Attorney for Applicant

O'KEEFE, EGAN & PETERMAN
1101 Capital of Texas Highway South
Building C, Suite 200
Austin, Texas 78746
(512) 347-1611
FAX: (512) 347-1615